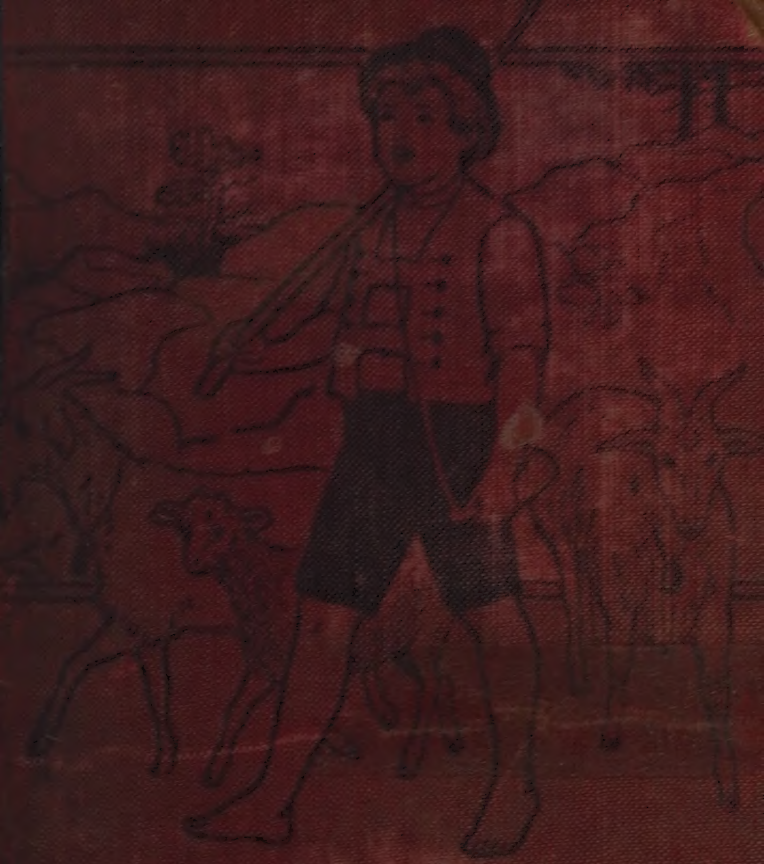

MONI THE GOAT BOY

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MONI THE GOAT-BOY

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MONI THE GOAT-BOY

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PREFACE

Those children or grown persons who are not familiar with Spyri's classic, "Heidi," may be envied for the pleasure that lies in store for them. A more fresh and attractive children's story does not exist.

In "Moni, the Goat-Boy," the author is again on familiar ground. The elements which give charm to the longer book are found once more here; the mountains of Switzerland, the goats and the picture of a generous and simple-hearted hero. The moral is such that no child can fail to be impressed by it. Even the older person with sufficient imagination to enter into the life of a little peasant boy will see that the central motive of the tale rings true. As to the surroundings, the author is never at fault.

Charles Wharton Stork

MONI THE GOAT-BOY

CHAPTER I

MONI IS HAPPY

If you wish to reach the Fideris Springs Inn, you must follow a steep road which leads through the long, beautiful valley of Prätiggau. It becomes such a very steep pull for the panting horses that most people prefer to get out of the coach and climb the green heights on foot.

First you pass Fideris, a pleasant village situated on a green slope. From there you strike into the heart of the mountains, till at last the lonely building of the Springs Inn is discovered.

Nothing but fir trees grow on the steep, sheer cliffs which surround it on all sides. Thus the place might seem gloomy, if the delicate mountain flowers, with their brilliant colors, did not peep out on all sides from the low pastures.

On a clear summer evening two ladies, after leaving the inn, began to pursue the trail that

rises not far from the house, till it finally winds up to the high towering cliffs. Near the first ledge the ladies halted to look at the view which met their eye; they had only just arrived in this part of the country.

"It doesn't seem to be very lively up here, Aunty," said the younger of the ladies, while she glanced from right to left and all about her. "Nothing but fir-trees and rocks, then behind them a mountain with more fir-trees. What shall I do all the next six weeks, if nothing exciting or funny ever will happen?"

"I shall by no means think it amusing if you should lose your diamond cross up here," the other lady replied, while she tied the red velvet ribbon on which the cross was fastened. "Now, Paula, this is at least the third time since we arrived that I have had to tie your ribbon. I should like to know if it is the ribbon's fault or yours? I am only certain that you will be wretched when it is lost."

Oh, Aunty," Paula exclaimed wit
n, "I shall not lose the cross, for I
at it is my grandmother's heirloom, and
reatest treasure."

The young girl, to protect the precious cross, dded two or three tight knots to the ribbon. Suddenly, catching a distant sound, she exclaimed, "Listen, Aunty, something lively must e coming this way."

A merry song, intermixed with a long far-sounding yodel, seemed to float down to them from far above. The ladies looked up in vain to discover the singer. It was impossible to e very far up the trail, for it wound down rough thick bushes and between projecting rocks. Suddenly, however, the path became animated on all sides with many little feet. Soon the song sounded quite near and much louder, till Paula suddenly called out: "Oh look, look, Aunty; oh look, just look!"

To her great delight, and before her aunt

re of it, three or four little goats ca
ling down, and then more and alwa
e; each having a small bell at its neck, whi
inkled merrily from here and there. Now t
goat-boy appeared with gay leaps, in the mid
of his flock. He was just singing the end of
song:

In winter I'm merry
It's no use to cry.
For spring follows after
He'll come by and by.

With a terrific yodel for conclusion, the bo
and his flock stood quite close by the ladie
for with his feet he could leap just as nimbl
as his little companions.

"Good evening," he said, merrily looking a
the two. He wanted to continue on his way
but they detained him, for they were wel
pleased with the boy's bright eye and face.

"Stay one moment, and tell me if you are
the goat-boy from Fideris," Paula said. "Do
the goats go up with you from the village?"

THE GRANDMOTHER WAS VERY MUCH PUZZLED WHEN MONI CAME HOME

HE WAS JUST SINGING THE END OF A SONG

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"Of course!" was the reply.

"And do you go up with them every day?"

"Of course I do."

"Well, well now, tell me your name."

"Moni."

"Won't you please sing me the song that you were just singing? We have only had the chance to hear one verse."

"I couldn't, because it is too long," Moni declared. "It will get too late for the goats. They must go home."

Giving his weather-beaten little hat a push, and swinging his rod, he called loudly to the goats. They had all begun to nibble at the grass, so he shouted to them, "Home now! Home!"

"I hope you will sing it to me another time, Moni, won't you?" Paula called after the boy.

"All right, I shall, and good-night," he answered back. Then trotting down with his flock he soon reached the inn. At the rear

building he halted, for the beautiful white goat and the black one with the dainty little kid belonged there, and Moni had to deposit them. The kid, which was a delicate little creature, he always treated with especial care, for he loved it tenderly. All day long the little thing would follow him around, it was so much attached to him. Putting it gently into its shed, he said: "Now, Mäggerli, sleep well. You must be tired! You really are too little to go so high up. Go lie down now in the soft straw."

After having put Mäggerli to rest in this fashion, he quickly strode down the incline in front of the inn with his flock. From there a road led to the hamlet, and on nearing it the boy took up his little horn and blew into it so vigorously that you could hear it for miles around. At this sign, children from all the scattered cottages came running to the spot to get their goats, which they could recognize from afar. Some women who lived near-by

would come out of their houses to lead their goats home, either by a string or by their horns, and in this way the flock was soon dispersed, and each little goat provided for. Moni was left now by himself, with his own brown goat. His home was a little house on the slope, and when he approached it, followed by the goat, he could see his grandmother already waiting for him in the doorway.

"How have things gone to-day, Moni?" she asked him in a very kindly way. Then leading the brown goat into the shed, she immediately began to milk it.

Moni's grandmother was still vigorous enough to do all the work in the house and shed herself, and keep everything neat and tidy. Moni stood in the doorway watching the present operation. When the milking was done, they entered the house.

"You must be hungry, Moni," she said. "Come and eat."

Everything was prepared for the meal. All Moni had to do was to sit down beside his grandmother and eat. Moni's supper consisted only of a plate of corn-meal cooked with goat's milk; nevertheless he heartily enjoyed it. During the meal he would tell his grandmother of all the happenings of the day. After he was done, he went to bed, to be ready for his early start next morning.

Moni had lived as a goat-boy for two summers now. He was so used to the life and so attached to his goats that he thought of nothing else. He could not remember ever having lived with anybody but his grandmother. His mother had died when he was little; his father, too, had deserted him, having gone to war in Naples. His father had hoped to make much money there, at least more than at home. Although his wife's mother was also poor, she took the little lonely boy to her home. Dividing all she had with little Solomon seemed to bring her

luck, for she had never yet had to suffer through want.

Everybody in the village liked brave old Elizabeth. When, two years before, a change in goat-boys had to be made, all voices unanimously elected Moni. Every one was glad to know that Moni could now help his hard-working grandmother by earning some pennies.

When Moni left in the morning, the pious woman never let him go without the following words: "Moni, be sure not to forget how near you are to our dear Lord up on the mountain. He can see and hear everything, and nothing can be hidden from His eyes. Do not forget that He is near you for help. Don't ever be afraid! If there are no people on the pasture to call on, just call to the Lord in your need! He'll hear you at once and come to your aid."

That had given Moni full confidence from the first. He had never been in the least afraid of the lonely heights and the steep cliffs, because

he always said to himself, "The higher up I go, the nearer I am to God. Whatever may happen, I shall be safe." So Moni lived happily without care or trouble, and enjoyed himself thoroughly from morning till night. To give vent to his good spirits, he whistled, sang and yodelled constantly all day long.

CHAPTER II

MONI'S LIFE ON THE ALP

On the following morning Paula was awakened earlier than ever in her life before by a lusty song.

"I shouldn't be at all suprised if this were the goat-boy," she said, jumping out of bed and running to the window. Just as she had guessed, Moni, with fresh, rosy cheeks, stood by the open shed. He had just brought out the old goat, and now fetched the kid. She saw him swinging his staff in the air and leading the way forward with his goats, which were leaping and jumping about him as they had started on their way. Suddenly raising his voice again, he sang out loud, while the echo resounded from the mountains:

Up on the fir trees
The merry birds sing,
For after a rain-storm
The sun's like a king.

"He must sing me his whole song to-day," Paula now said, for Moni had already disappeared, and she could not follow the words any more.

Rosy clouds were trailing overhead, while Moni's cheeks were fanned by the morning breeze. He loved this delicious cool air when he was climbing. In his extreme well-being he could not restrain himself from a lively yodel. Many sleepers in the hotel opened their eyes in astonishment when they were wakened thus. Soon, however, they gladly shut them again in the happy consciousness that another hour still was left for sleep. They were all familiar with the voice of the goat-boy who was up and about so early.

Meanwhile Moni with his goats was climbing higher up, till after an hour's time he got near to the steepest crags. The further up he went, the more beautiful the scene became. Looking about him from time to time, he would gaze up

at the sky that was turning a deeper blue every minute. Moni began his song now, which swelled louder and clearer the higher up he went.

Up in the fir-tree
The merry birds sing,
For after a rain-storm
The sun's like a king.

The sun and the stars
And the moon in the night
Our dear Lord has fashioned
To give us delight.

The joy of the spring flowers
In yellow and red
And the joy of the blue sky
Has gone to my head.

In summer grow berries,
I pick them in haste,
The black ones and red ones
Are well to my taste.

In the hedge here are nuts, and
I know where to find
Good herbs, for my goats like
To gnaw the best kind.

In winter I'm merry,
It's no use to cry.
For spring follows after
He'll come by and by.

Moni had planned to spend the day in a spot where he usually settled down. At last he reached the small green field where from a broad projecting rock you could look far down on all sides into the valley. This prominent rock was called the "Pulpit Rock." Hour after hour Moni could spend there, gazing about him and whistling to himself, while his little goats contentedly grazed on the herbs.

On his arrival, the boy placed his bag with provisions in a hole he had dug for that purpose. When this was done, he stepped out on the Pulpit Rock and threw himself down on the ground, meaning to enjoy life to the full.

The sky was of the deepest hue. Opposite to him the high mountain peaks with their huge ice-fields were slowly appearing through the morning mist, and below him the green valley

shone in brilliant light. Moni was lying high up above the clouds, looking about him, whistling and singing. The cool mountain breeze was cooling his hot cheeks. I am sure that no city boy has ever felt such supreme well-being as did this simple boy on his hard rock.

When he stopped whistling for a moment, the birds above him merrily took up his song, before they flew high up into the sky. Mäggerli came from time to time to rub its head against Moni's shoulder. Full of affection, it bleated, and walked around to Moni's other side, tenderly rubbing its soft head on him again. The other goats also would take a turn to look at their goat-herd and each one had its own way of paying the little call. Moni's own brown goat always seemed to come with great solicitude, as if she wanted to find out if all was well with her owner. Standing before him, she gazed at him thoughtfully, till Moni would say: "Everything is all right, Brownie; just go back

to your herbs." There were two that always came together. One was a young white goat and the other one was called "Swallow" because of her slenderness and agility in running about, which could be likened to the bird's swiftness in flying into its hole. They used to run to Moni with such force that they could easily have upset him if the boy had not already been stretched out on the ground. With equal swiftness they also took their leave.

The shining black goat, Mäggerli's mother, which belonged to the host of the inn, was a trifle proud. She did not deem it wise to lower herself by coming too confidentially near to the boy; she would keep a distance of several steps, looking at Moni with lifted head, and would then with great dignity resume her own pursuits.

Big Sultan, the billy-goat, regularly appeared once a day, and pushing everybody aside he happened to meet in Moni's neighborhood, he would bleat, full of self-importance, several

times. He felt himself clearly the leader, and as such gave the boy a full account of the state of his flock.

Mäggerli alone could never be driven from her protector's side in this fashion; at the arrival of the billy-goat it would quickly hide deep under Moni's arm or head, so that it was quite impossible for Big Sultan to get near it. Sheltered in that way, it was no more afraid. If it happened to encounter the big goat alone, however, it generally shook with fear.

The pleasant sunny morning had gone by, Moni had finished his dinner and stood leaning on his big staff, which made climbing up and down so easy. He was wondering which new side of the rocks he should explore this afternoon with his goats. At last he decided to try the left side, which led to the three picturesque Dragon Rocks; in their vicinity the most luscious bushes grew in abundance, and this made the place a veritable paradise for his little charges.

The trail was quite steep, and there was many a dangerous spot to beware of on the abrupt side of the precipice. But he knew a good way to get there, and with perfect confidence in the common-sense of his flock, that had never yet gotten lost, he led the way. Merrily all the goats followed, sometimes ahead and sometimes behind him, Mäggerli always keeping close to his side. Passing an especially dangerous place, he would gently hold and pull the little goat along. Everything went well, and the whole company arrived on top, safe and sound. Leaping away, the goats now attacked the green bushes. They recognized the delicate food that they had had the privilege of nibbling several times before.

"Take your time; don't be so wild!" came Moni's warning. "Don't push each other off the sheer rocks, please! It would just take one second for one of you to tumble down and break your legs. Swallow, look out! what has come into

your head?" he now shouted up to the rocks above him. The swift goat had already climbed up as high as the Dragon Rocks, and standing on the furthest edge of one, was pertly looking down on him. With tremendous swiftness the boy climbed up, for it needed only one false step for Swallow to drop into the chasm. He had reached the dangerous rock in a very few minutes. Grabbing Swallow's leg, he quickly pulled her down. "Come with me now, silly little beast," Moni was scolding, while he was leading her down to the others. He kept a tight hold of her till she had begun to nibble eagerly on a bush. He then knew that she had given up the thought of running away.

"Where is Mäggerli?" Moni suddenly cried out. He only saw the black goat standing quietly on a steep precipice not even touching the grass. The kid was always either near Moni's side or running after its mother.

"Where have you left your little kid, black

one?" he called out in his fright, while he was running over to the goat. She behaved very strangely indeed. Not eating or moving from the spot, she refused to budge from her position, only sometimes she seemed to prick her ears suspiciously. Planting himself close to her, Moni looked upward and downward. Now he could hear a low, plaintive bleat; surely that was Mäggerli's voice that came so pitifully from far below, calling for help. Moni lay down on the ground to lean forward. Yes, now he could see something moving below. He could see it plainly now! It was Mäggerli, hanging on a tree branch jutting out from a rock. Its bleating seemed to break the boy's heart. It must have fallen down.

Luckily the branch had caught the kid, otherwise it would have died a horrible death by falling down the precipice. The danger was by no means past, for if it lost hold of the bough, it would be hurled into the depths and be dashed to pieces.

In his extreme anxiety, the boy called down: "Hold on tight, Mäggerli, don't let go of the branch! Wait till I come and fetch you!"

That was easier said than accomplished. The sides of the cliffs were absolutely sheer, and Moni knew well enough that nobody could climb down from where he was. Then he remembered a rock further below in the same altitude as that where the kid was stranded. This was an overhanging rock called the Rain-Cliff, which gave good shelter in case of rain. All goat-boys for years back had spent the rainy days under its protection, so the "Rain-Cliff" had had its name a long time.

Moni had decided to get to the kid by starting from there; then by climbing straight across the cliffs he might be able to bring the goat safely back. Quickly gathering his flock together with a shrill whistle, he descended in a great hurry to the entrance of the Rain-Cliff. There he left his goats peacefully grazing, while he

began his perilous journey. The kid, though not so very far away from him, was unfortunately high above on a branch. It would be no easy task to climb up there and back with Mäggerli on his shoulders. Nevertheless it was the only possible way to save the little creature.

Now he remembered his grandmother's words regarding our Lord in Heaven. Assured that with God's help he would not fail, he folded his hands, praying aloud, "Oh, kind God, help me to save poor little Mäggerli!" This gave him great confidence, and climbing nimbly up the side of the rocks, he had soon reached the tree. Holding on tight with both feet, he lifted the trembling, moaning little kid up to his shoulders. Cautiously he retraced his steps, and it would be hard to tell you how thankful he was when he again stood on the firm ground. The joy at seeing the frightened kid safe again made him exclaim aloud, "Oh, kind Lord, a thousand times I thank thee for Thy help! We are

CAUTIOUSLY HE RETRACED HIS STEPS

both so glad!" His heart still overflowed with gratitude to God in Heaven when he sat on the ground with the little kid. He petted and stroked the little goat, which was still trembling in every limb. Moni was trying to console it after its bitter fear, and when it was time for departure soon afterwards, he again lifted Mäggerli up to his shoulder. Tenderly he said, "Well, my poor dear Mäggerli, you are still trembling all over! You couldn't possibly walk down to-day. Come, I'll carry you instead." So the little creature that clung closely to him was safely carried down the whole way on that eventful afternoon.

On the nearest incline above the hotel, Paula, accompanied by her aunt, was already waiting for the goat-boy. When she saw Moni coming down with his load, Paula asked if the kid was sick. Her sympathy seemed so great that Moni, sitting down on the ground, told Paula his day's adventure with Mäggerli. The young lady's

interest in the matter was very keen. She stroked the rescued little creature. How cunning it looked now, lying peacefully on Moni's knees, with its little white legs and the glossy black coat on its back! It seemed quite willing to be petted.

"Please sing me your song now, Moni, since you are so well settled here," said Paula.

The boy's heart was so full to-day that he gladly began his song. He never paused till he had ended. Paula was delighted with his performance and told him of her hope to hear it soon repeated.

It was time to go now, and before long the whole company had reached the hotel. Mäggerli was laid gently down on its couch, and saying good-bye, Moni hurried home.

Paula, returning to her room with her aunt, still kept on talking about the goat-boy, whose cheerful morning anthem she already longed to hear again.

CHAPTER III

A VISIT

SEVERAL days passed in this manner, with the sun always shining brightly overhead. The weather had been particularly fine all summer, and not a single cloud seemed to trouble the deep blue sky. The goat-boy had passed the inn regularly every morning at an early hour with a cheerful song on his lips. He returned in the same fashion, and had he not done so the guests at the inn would have felt cheated, they were by this time so accustomed to his songs. Paula above all the others delighted in Moni's mirth, nearly every night she came out to greet him, for she enjoyed talking to the boy.

Moni had arrived on the Pulpit Rock on a bright, sunny morning, when before throwing himself down as usual, he resolved to go further up. "Forward!" he shouted. "Last time we were high up you had to leave all the tender

little leaves behind you, on account of Mäggerli's fall. You can go up to-day to finish your meal."

Joyfully the goats climbed after their leader, for they knew the way to the Dragon Rocks and they well remembered the succulent bushes. Moni did not take any chances with Mäggerli this time; holding it firmly in his arms, he picked the leaves from the rocks himself and gave them to Mäggerli to eat. The little kid seemed glad enough to eat out of his hand, and to show its gratefulness to Moni it would rub its soft little head on the boy's shoulder from time to time, bleating happily the while.

The whole morning had passed before Moni noticed how hungry he was himself. He knew that it must be late, but unfortunately he had planned to go back to the Pulpit Rock for his dinner, so he had left his bag down there in the hole. At last he said to the goats, "You have had your fill now, while I haven't even had a bite. Come quickly down after me, for I too

must have something to eat. There will be plenty left for you down below. Come along now!"

When he had given a loud whistle, the whole company was up and away. Swallow, followed by some other lively goats, leaped down ahead on the steep incline. Jumping from rock to rock and over many a cleft, she suddenly stopped, for an unusual obstacle was standing right in her way. It was a chamois, which was curiously looking at her. Such a thing had never happened to the lively goat before! Standing stock-still, she looked questioningly at the stranger, waiting till it should get out of her way; for she wanted to leap to the next rock and proceed on her journey. Great was her surprise when the chamois, never budging, merely stared impertinently at her.

...nding obstinately right in front of each ..., they surely would be standing there to ... day, had not Big Sultan arrived meanwhile.

He saw the state of things at once, and carefully passing by Swallow, he gave the chamois a push which nearly threw it down the mountain-side. Only a daring leap saved it. The Swallow could proceed triumphantly on her way, followed by Sultan, pleased as a king. Well satisfied with his deed, he had the proud consciousness of being the strong protector of his flock.

While Moni was wandering down, another goat-boy was climbing up, always higher, till at last the two boys met. First they glanced at each other with surprise, but soon their astonishment was over, for, being old acquaintances, they greeted each other cordially. The newcomer was Jörgli of Klübis. Half the morning he had hunted in vain for Moni. When he had nearly given up hope, he had found the boy at last, much higher up than he had expected.

"I never thought you went so high up as this with your goats," said Jörgli.

"I don't always," Moni replied. "Generally I stay by the Pulpit Rock, or in its neighborhood. Why have you come up here?"

"I have come to pay you a call," was the reply, "because I have a lot to tell you about. I have two goats here with me, which I had to show to the landlord of the inn. He is going to buy one, so I thought I would come up here to you, as long as I was so near."

"Are they your goats?" Moni asked.

"Of course they are ours; I don't tend the strange ones any more because I am no longer a goat-boy."

Moni was very much surprised at this news. Jörgli had been made goat-boy of Klübis at the same time Moni had undertaken these duties for Fideris. Moni could not understand how Jörgli could give up his position without a single murmur.

The two boys had meantime reached the Pulpit Cliff with their flock. Moni, getting

his bread, with a little piece of smoked meat, invited Jörgli to share the repast. Sitting down, they set to and enjoyed their dinner to the full, both being blessed with good appetites, besides which they had had to wait long for their lunch, as it was already late. When all was eaten and they had both had some goat's milk to drink, Jörgli stretched himself comfortably at full length on the ground, resting his head on both elbows. Moni had remained in a sitting posture, for he loved to look down from his height into the valley far below.

"What are you doing now, Jörgli?" Moni began to question his companion. "If you are not a goat-boy any longer, you must be doing something else."

"Surely I am doing something else; something very fine too. I am selling eggs now. I go with the eggs into all the inns, as far as I have time to. I come up to the Fideris Springs Inn sometimes; I was there yesterday."

Shaking his head, Moni said, "I certainly don't envy you. I wouldn't be an egg-boy for anything in the world; it is a thousand times better to be a goat-boy. Why, it is ever so much nicer."

"Well, what will you say next, I should like to know?"

"Why, the eggs are not alive! You can't talk to them and they can't possibly run after you the way the goats do. They are never pleased when you come to them, and they don't ever get fond of you. The goats, on the contrary, understand every word you say; I don't see how you can have as good a time with your eggs as you had with the goats."

"Well, I don't see that you have much fun up here," Jörgli interrupted now. "During lunch-time you had to get up at least six times to run after that silly kid, and had to keep it from tumbling down. Do you call that fun?"

"Yes, because I like to do it! Don't I, Mäg-

gerli? Come, come!" Moni had to jump up again, because the kid was making perilous leaps from sheer enjoyment.

When Moni had settled down again, Jörgli continued: "I know of a good way to keep young kids from falling down the rocks without running after them all the time the way you do."

"What way do you mean?" asked Moni.

"Just drive a stick firmly into the ground and tie the kid to it by one leg. Of course it will kick hard, but it can't get away."

"Well, you may be sure that I will do no such thing to my little kid!" Moni exclaimed indignantly, drawing Mäggerli close to him, as if he had to protect it from such outrageous treatment.

"You know of course that you won't have to take care of this little one very much longer," Jörgli said now. "It isn't coming up here much longer."

"What did you say? What? Tell me, Jörgli what do you mean?" Moni asked.

"Pooh, don't you know it yet? The landlord doesn't want to raise it, because it isn't over-strong and will never make a healthy goat. He has tried to sell it to my father, but my father didn't want it either. The landlord is going to have it killed next week and after that he'll buy our speckled goat."

Moni's face had turned white in his fright; he could not even utter a word. Suddenly, however, he lamented loudly, petting the little kid.

"No, no, they must never do that! Poor little Mäggerli, they mustn't! I could never stand it if they killed you. Oh, I'd much rather die with you on the spot. Oh dear, this mustn't happen!"

"Don't go on that way," Jörgli said, quite vexed, while he tried to raise Moni, who had fallen flat on his face with grief. "Sit up and

forget about it. You know well enough that the kid belongs to the landlord, and that he can do with it as he pleases. Well, it's over now, isn't it? I'll show you something. Look, see!" With these words, Jörgli held out one hand. With the other one, however, he covered a small object which was to furnish Moni distraction from his sorrow. The object sparkled brightly underneath, for the sun's rays shone straight upon it.

"What have you there?" Moni asked, when he saw the bright object sparkling in the sun.

"Guess."

"A ring?"

"No, but something like it."

"Who gave it to you?"

"Nobody has given it me; I found it."

"But then it doesn't really belong to you, Jörgli."

"Why not, I should like to know? I haven't taken it from anybody; on the contrary, I

nearly stepped on it, and then it would have been broken. I can keep it just as if it was mine."

"Where did you find it?"

"I found it yesterday evening near the Springs Inn."

"I am sure that somebody in the house has lost it. You must go to the landlord and tell him about it. If you don't, I will do it to-night."

"No, please don't do that, Moni," Jörgli implored. "I'll show you what I'll do. I am going to sell it to one of the chambermaids in the inn, but I won't give it to her for less than four francs. I'll give you one or two if you won't tell on me. Nobody will ever know anything about it then."

"I won't take anything. I don't want the money," Moni interrupted his companion harshly. "God has heard every word you have said, Jörgli; don't you know that?"

Jörgli, after looking doubtfully up to the sky, replied: "Well, He is pretty far away!" Moni's

words had made an impression on him, however, for he began to whisper.

"God can hear you just the same," Moni said now full of conviction.

Jörgli was getting quite uncomfortable under those words. He knew that everything was lost unless he could bring Moni to his way of thinking. After meditating hard for a solution, he suddenly said; "Moni, if you won't tell anybody what I found, I'll make a promise that will please you. You don't have to take any money for it, if you don't want to; then you are not in the least responsible. If you want me to, I'll ask my father to buy Mäggerli from the landlord after all, and I'll beg him not to kill it."

These words aroused a terrible struggle in Moni. He knew quite well that it was wrong to keep the find a secret. When Jörgli had opened his hand, he had seen for the first time a beautiful cross, set with a great number of

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stones that sparkled in many colors. Moni knew that this was not a worthless thing by any means. Probably somebody was looking for it. If he kept silence about it, he would be just as guilty as if he was keeping it himself.

On the other hand, Mäggerli's pitiful death by the knife rose before his eyes. Darling, affectionate Mäggerli! And he could save it by his silence. At this very moment Mäggerli lay trustfully beside him; it always seemed to expect his protection, for it was much in need of it; he had to do everything to save it, he must not let it perish!

"I'll do it, Jörgli," he said joylessly at last.

"Let us shake hands on it," Jörgli said, now holding out his hand to Moni. This was done to make the promise absolutely binding.

Jörgli was glad to have the matter settled to his own advantage, and as Moni had not said another word he thought it wise to start homewards with his two goats, for he lived

much further off than Moni. So, after saying good-bye, he whistled to his little companions. These had been attacked repeatedly by Moni's goats; they had no party manners and did not know that politeness is essential on a visit. The two goats from Kübliser chose the best herbs for themselves while they pushed the others away; so of course they were properly reproved.

When Jörgli was half-way down the mountain-side Moni decided to start home with his flock. But strangely enough he kept absolute silence and all the way did not sing or whistle.

CHAPTER IV

MONI CAN'T SING ANY MORE

On the following morning Moni approached the shed of the inn in the same crest-fallen mood. He was still as unhappy as the evening before. Without a sound he fetched the landlord's goats and started on his way. Not a single note escaped him, no merry yodel clove the air; with hanging head he climbed the trail, looking most forlorn, and afraid to be seen by anybody. From time to time he looked shyly around, as if he expected somebody behind him to ask him a sudden question.

Moni could not feel happy any longer but he did not in the least know why. After all, he had saved Mäggerli, and that ought to have made him glad. But whenever he tried to sing, he found his heart too heavy for the task, his voice was gone! Because the sky was covered with heavy clouds that day Moni attributed

his low spirits chiefly to the absence of the sun. He firmly believed that his gayety would return with its rays.

As soon as he had reached his destination, it began to rain. So, for shelter from the heavy down-pour, he sought the Rain-Cliff. The goats, following his example, also planted themselves near him under the rocks. The distinguished black goat, to save her lovely shining hair, had even crept under the rock before Moni. Sitting behind the boy, she happily watched the pouring rain from her comfortable corner. Mäggerli was standing in front of her protector. Rubbing her head tenderly on the boy's knees, she looked up to him in great surprise, for the kid had always heard friendly words from Moni, and now he was not uttering a single syllable. The brown goat, too, scratched with her legs and bleated loudly in her astonishment at the altered mood of the boy. Moni sat thoughtfully leaning on the staff which he

always took in rainy weather to prevent him from slipping on dangerous places with his shoes. He sat there thinking, hour after hour.

Moni thought over his promise to Jörgli. He really felt as if he had stolen something, for Jörgli was giving him a reward for his silence. He had done a wrong, and he felt in his heart that God was angry with him. He was glad that the weather was dull and rainy; he could hide under the rock instead of having to look up at the fair blue sky. He would have been more afraid of God if the sun had been shining brightly.

Suddenly a terrible thought entered his mind. What would happen if Mäggerli should fall down over a steep cliff again and God would not help him when he tried to save it? He would never feel safe any more, if he had to do without God's protection. How could he possibly pray with a wrong troubling his heart? If he should slip and tumble down the pointed

cliffs with Mäggerli, they would both be dashed and torn to pieces. No! he said in his troubled heart, such a thing must never happen! Before all other things, he would try to pray to God and ask to be relieved of the weight that lay upon him. Only then could he be glad again. This Moni felt distinctly.

He would go at once and tell the landlord, and so throw away the horrible load. But what would happen then? Jörgli would never persuade his father to buy Mäggerli, and the little goat was sure to die. No, no! he could never bear that. Desperate in his plight, he exclaimed, "No, I won't do it, I won't say it!"

He did not feel any better for this decision, however, and the weight on his heart grew constantly heavier. All day had passed in this sad fashion, and when the evening came he went silently home as before.

Paula, as usual, was standing near the inn. When she saw Moni coming along, she ran over

to him and anxiously asked, "Moni, what is the matter with you? Why don't you sing any more?"

Shyly turning away, Moni answered, "I can't!" and as quickly as possible he took his goats and himself out of her sight.

"If I only knew what has happened to our goat-boy! I hardly know him any more, he is so changed. I wish he would sing again," Paula said to her aunt.

"Well, I guess it is this horrible rain that depresses him," was her aunt's opinion.

"Oh, everything always happens all at once! I wish we could go home, Aunty!" Paula implored. "All the fun is over here! First I lose my cross and can't find it any more, and next comes this horrible rain to spoil all the fun. Now we can't even hear our merry goat-boy any longer. Oh, let us go away from here!"

"We have to finish the cure, there is no help for that," the aunt declared.

Next morning it was dull and gray again, and the rain still pattered down. Moni spent his day under the Rain-Cliff, with the same troublesome thoughts coursing continuously through his mind. Whenever he decided to reveal his wrong and to make peace with God, he saw the kid before his eyes, dying painfully under the cruel knife. Then his mental struggles began again, and he would rack his brain to find a way out. This brooding all day over his trouble and anxiety made him dead tired. When he went home in the evening he was so occupied with his thoughts that he hardly noticed the violent rain.

The landlord happened to see Moni that evening, and when the boy stopped at the shed, the man said roughly, "Well, they certainly are wet enough. Go in with them! Why do you creep down like a snail now-a-days? I wonder what has gotten into you?"

Moni had never had any but friendly words from the man; the landlord liked the cheerful

goat-boy, and had always given him a friendly word. But he did not like Moni's changed behavior, and being in quite a state over the loss of Paula's cross, which according to the lady must have happened in the near vicinity of the inn, he was in a mighty poor humor. The young lady had assured him that she had lost the cross while stepping out of the house to hear the home-coming goat-boy's song. The landlord was furious when he thought that a precious object should be lost in his house and not be found again. Only the day before he had called together all his servants and having examined and threatened them, had ended by promising a reward. The whole house seemed upset over the loss.

When Moni passed the front of the house, Paula stood there to talk to him, as was her custom. Waiting for him there, she had wondered if he would still be silent as on the day before and unwilling to sing. When he was

quietly walking by her, she said, "Moni, Moni! Are you the same goat-boy who used to sing so cheerfully all day:

And the joy of the blue sk
Has gone to my head?"

Moni heard these words, and they made a great impression on him, despite his silence. Oh, what a terrible change had come! Everything had seemed so bright and gay before, and he had felt like singing all day long. Oh, if he could only feel as he had felt then!

Moni climbed up again to his haunt, next day, but his songs had vanished with his spirits. The rain had stopped at last; some remaining gray clouds obscured the sky, and heavy mists everywhere covered the mountains. Sitting again under his rock, the boy struggled as before. Towards noon, the sky began to get clearer and brighter. Coming out of his shelter, Moni looked about him. The goats could jump around merrily again, and even the little kid seemed

quite beside itself with joy over the returning sunshine. Happily it leaped about.

Down in the valley and high on the mountain tops the weather visibly brightened. The clouds had parted to let the friendly blue sky peep cheerfully down. Moni, who had been standing on the Pulpit Rock watching the spectacle, felt as if God were glancing down on him kindly from the beautiful blue sky. At last he saw his duty clearly before him. He could not bear the weight any more; he had to lay it off. Mäggerli, the little kid, was just jumping by near him, so Moni took it tenderly on his arm and said,

"Oh, my poor, poor little Mäggerli. I have done my best for you, but I must not do wrong. Oh, if you only did not have to die! Oh, I won't be able to bear it, I know that!"

The boy burst out crying so bitterly that his tears choked him and he could not say another word. The little goat, creeping under his arm,

bleated most pitifully. It meant to seek safety and hide. It was time to go home now, and Moni, lifting his pet up to his shoulder, said, "Come, Mäggerli, I'll carry you home to-day; maybe it is the last time; for I am sure I shan't do it very many times more."

Paula was lying in wait for the procession when it passed by the inn. After the black goat and kid were safely deposited in the shed, Moni made for the house, passing Paula on his way. Generally he went right home, so she detained him.

"No singing yet, Moni? Where are you going, and what makes your face look so troubled?"

"I have to tell the landlord something," Moni replied, without raising his eyes.

"What do you want to tell him? Can't I hear about it?"

"I must see the landlord; I want to tell him that something has been found."

"What was found? What is it? I have lost something too, a very beautiful cross."

"Yes, that's it."

"What good news!" exclaimed Paula, greatly surprised. "Is it a cross set with sparkling stones?"

"Yes."

"Where is it, Moni? Give it to me, Moni! Did you find it?"

"No, but Jörgli of Küblis did."

Paula wanted to know now who Jörgli was and where he lived. She proposed to send somebody down to Küblis right away to get the cross.

"I'll go there quickly myself, and if he has it still I'll bring it up to you," Moni replied.

"If he still has it?" Paula said. "Well, why shouldn't he have it any more? How did you hear of it all, Moni? Where did he find it? Who told you?"

Moni stared at the ground; he must not tell what had passed, and how he had helped to

conceal the matter. Paula was very good and kind to him, however. She must have divined that something had upset the boy. Leading him to a tree-trunk, she sat down beside him and said, with great kindness: "Come, now, tell me how it all happened. I should like to hear about it."

That gave Moni confidence to tell the whole story. He revealed to Paula his terrible anxiety for Mäggerli and how he had lost all happiness because he did not dare to look up to God, and how to-day at last he had resolved to clear his conscience.

Paula, in her kindness of heart, talked very gently to him. She told him that of course it would have been much better if he had revealed everything at once. Nevertheless, he had done it all purely of his own accord, and so he should never repent of his act. Paula informed Moni that Jörgli should receive ten francs as soon as she was again in possession of the cross.

THAT GAVE MONI CONFIDENCE TO TELL THE WHOLE STORY

"Ten francs!" repeated the boy in astonishment. He well remembered the price for which Jörgli had wanted to part with the treasure. Moni, getting up, immediately set out. If he went to Küblis to-night to get the cross, he would be able to take it up with him the next morning. At last he could run again and make gay leaps! His heart felt light for the weight was lifted from it at last.

On reaching home, he deposited the brown goat without much ado. His grandmother was informed that he had an errand, and before she could ask any questions he was on his way to Küblis. Jörgli was at home and when he heard what Moni had done, he began to get angry. He realized, however, that concealment was impossible now, as he was known to be the finder. Bringing the cross to Moni he asked: "Is she going to give me something for it?"

"Yes she will, but if you had been honest from the start, you could have gotten ten francs

right away." Moni said, indignantly. "With your lies, you could get no more than four and now the lady has promised you ten."

Jörgli was mightily surprised, and was also sorry that he had not taken the cross to the inn immediately after finding it by the door. His conscience had been sorely troubled, a discomfort he might easily have been spared. Alas, it was too late to do anything about it now.

It was already dark, and when Moni had received the cross he went home with it in great haste.

CHAPTER V

MONI CAN SING AGAIN

PAULA had given orders to be awakened early next morning; she wanted to be up and dressed when the goat-boy passed the house, for she intended to talk with him herself. She had quite a long conversation with the innkeeper that evening, and it had seemed to end to her great satisfaction. She must have made a successful bargain with him for she looked very cheerful.

Next morning, when the goat-boy approached the inn with his flock, Paula was already standing near the house. "Moni, can't you sing yet?" she called to him.

Shaking his head, he replied, "No, I can't possibly sing any more. I have to think of poor little Mäggerli's death all the time. I wonder how often I can still take it up with me; I'll

never be happy any more as long as I live! Here is the cross!" With that, he handed the girl a little parcel, for his grandmother had carefully wrapped up the treasure in three or four pieces of paper.

After unwrapping the cross Paula looked at it carefully; she saw before her absolutely unharmed, the beautiful sparkling cross she had lost.

"Moni," she said kindly to her little friend "you have made me very happy! Without you, I should never have seen my cross again. Now I have a little surprise for you, too, as a reward. Go and fetch Mäggerli from the shed. From now on the kid belongs to you!"

With wide-open astonished eyes the boy looked at Paula. He did not seem to comprehend her words, for he stammered: "But,—how—how could Mäggerli possibly belong to me?"

"Well, I'll tell you how!" Paula said, with

a beaming face. "I bought it from the innkeeper yesterday, and to-day I am giving it to you. Will you be able to sing again now, Moni?"

"Oh, oh, oh!" Moni exclaimed, while he ran like mad to the shed and pulled out the kid to take it on his arm. Running back again to where Paula stood, he held out his hand to her and said over and over again. "Thank you a thousand, thousand times! May God reward you! I only wish I could do you some favor too!"

"You can do me one by singing your song, for I should like to hear how it sounds after all these dreary days," said Paula.

Moni did not reflect long, but burst out into his song and while he was still singing, he started to climb the mountain with his goats. His jubilant tones rang far down into the valley, and there was no one in the inn who did not hear the cheerful singer. Many turned on their pillows, muttering:

"The goat-boy has good weather again."

Everybody was glad when they heard his merry song, for they had long been accustomed to be waked by it daily; some would get up, and many would sleep longer.

When Moni, looking down, could still see the young lady standing in front of the house, he stepped out near to the edge and sang down, as loudly as he could:

And the joy of the blue sky
Has gone to my head.

All day long nothing but peals of joy came from Moni's lips. The goats also caught his happiness, and could be seen jumping and leaping merrily to and fro, as if they were having a feast. The sun was shining doubly bright from the blue sky after all the recent rain, the herbs were particularly fresh and green, the little red and yellow flowers sparkled; Moni felt as if he had never seen the mountains, the valley and the whole world as beautiful as they

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were that day. He was absolutely inseparable from his little kid. Picking the best plants for Mäggerli, he fed it tenderly, while he said over and over again, "Mäggerli, my darling! my dear little Mäggerli, now you won't have to die! You belong to me now, so we can go up to the pasture together as long as we live."

When he returned at night, his songs could be heard for miles around. When he had deposited the black goat in its shed, he took the little kid on his arm. It was going home with him now, and the kid did not even seem to mind leaving its accustomed home; it seemed perfectly contented under his protection. Pressing closely against Moni, it showed plainly how it loved the boy, who really had treated it with much more love and affection than had its own mother.

The grandmother was very much puzzled when Moni came home with the kid on his shoulder. She could not comprehend what had

happened, despite Moni's shouting to her from far, "It belongs to me now, grandmother, it is mine!"

Moni had no time yet to tell her more, for busily running to the shed, he prepared a fine soft couch of fresh straw for Mäggerli. He did not want the kid to be afraid of its new abode, so he said to it, while he laid it down: "Now sleep well in your new home, Mäggerli! You shall always have a new bed every day."

Only when he came back for supper and was sitting by his surprised old grandmother did Moni tell her the whole tale from the beginning of his sad days till the happy ending that had taken place to-day. Listening quietly and attentively, the grandmother said at last: "As long as you live, Moni, you must never forget what has happened to you; God had devised a way to help you long before you suffered for the wrong you did to save your little pet. As soon as you acted right and did what pleased

Him, He was going to find a pleasant way out of your difficulty. If you had had confidence in Him and kept from doing wrong, everything would have come out happily from the start. God has really helped you beyond your merits, so as long as you live, be sure not to forget it."

"No, I certainly shall not," Moni eagerly assented. "I shall always say to myself, 'My only duty is to do what is right before God. If I do that He will be sure to fix everything just right for me.'"

Before going to bed that night, Moni had to run out to the shed once more. Peeping in, he saw his little kid sleeping soundly; he could hardly yet believe the wonderful truth! There was no doubt of it, however, the little kid belonged to him.

Jörgli received ten francs as Paula had promised him. But he did not escape from the matter as easily as that. When next he went to the Springs Inn, he was led before the innkeeper.

Taking the boy by the collar, the angry man shook him hard, saying in a menacing tone, "Jörgli, Jörgli, better not try again to bring my household into discredit! If a thing like that happens a second time, you'll be sent out of my house in a way that you won't like. Do you see the willow rod up there? I'll give you a good thrashing with that next time, so look out, I tell you. Go and don't forget my words."

There were other consequences to his wicked action. If anything at all got lost in the inn from that time on, all the servants immediately cried out, "No doubt Jörgli from Küblis has it!"

If the boy should chance to come to the house at the time, they would crowd around him, crying, "Give it to us, Jörgli, let us have it!" However much he would protest and assure them that he did not have anything and didn't even know what they were looking for, they would just shout, "Oh, we know you!" and "You can't fool us."

In this way the boy had constantly to suffer and had hardly a single moment's peace. As soon as anyone approached him, he was always afraid that the person would ask him if he had found this or that object. The boy could not be happy any more, for he had to think a hundred times, "If I had only returned the cross right away! As long as I live, I shall never keep anything that I don't own."

Moni, on the contrary, never stopped singing all summer long. He would shout and yodel with merriment up there with his goats, and no mortal on earth was as happy as he. Often, as he was lying full length on the Pulpit Rock, looking gaily down into the sunny valley, he remembered the fearful days when with a heavy load on his heart he was sitting under the Rain-Cliff, all joy gone from him. Then he said to himself, "I won't let such a thing happen again. I shall never do anything that will prevent me from cheerfully looking up at

the sky. I shall never again act against God's divine will."

Sometimes when Moni, deep in his own thoughts, forgot his little charges one or the other of these gay companions would approach him, full of astonishment at his behavior. Sometimes they had to bleat quite loudly before they at last attracted his attention. Only when his Mäggerli came and called longingly for his company, he would always hear right away. Raising himself, he would run joyfully to its side, for the tiny, affectionate kid was and always remained his dearest treasure.

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